

I felt my blood start to boil

By Lisa (L.J.) Hing

In 1994 I got out of a really abusive relationship. This was not my three sons' father but a man that promised me the world. As far as their dad, he never had anything to do with them. I was tired of working three jobs during the week and one on the weekends, waiting tables, bar tending and cleaning offices ... not to mention being mom and dad to the boys. I had a whole lot of energy back then but it was wearing me down quick.

One morning before getting the boys off to school I was reading the local classified ads and saw an ad for a truck driving school. I called and inquired about it and decided right then that I needed to make a man's wage so I needed to get a man's job. I enrolled in a eight-week course, the only female in a class of fifteen men. My first day I was really nervous ... thinking that I was going to get "slack" from everyone. I was totally surprised by them all. Everyone was really cool with me, including the instructors. After four weeks in the classroom, we got to actually drive. I have to brag a bit now, I drove circles around most.

A lot of recruiters from different OTR companies stopped by to try and get us to come aboard, but I needed to be home for my boys. No one explained in class that

most local companies want you to have at least two years of experience, mainly OTR. I guess if you knew someone it might be a whole different thing, but I unfortunately didn't. I didn't know what I was going to do.



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One of the driving instructors told me that maybe I should go back home and just be what I was born to be. That was all I needed to hear! I felt my blood start to boil. I knew then I was going to have to figure out something. By the end of the day, that same instructor came up to me and asked me if I had

decided to quit. I just glared at him. With a smile he said, "I was hoping I would get that look, that's why I said what I said. You're a really great driver and the industry could really use you." He told me I needed to figure out a plan so I could do the OTR for at least a year. Back then, that was really the only way to get local work.

So with a whole lot of help from my parents, sister and, yes, finally their dad, I took an OTR job. I got home about every two weeks. It was the hardest thing I have ever had to do. Being away from my babies was the worst. Although they were not technically "babies," but 9, 9 and 11 (I had twins); it was still very hard on me. They handled it great though. I got to take one at a time out with me in the summer months. They loved it. I have to admit

though, the best thing that came out of me being away so much was that they now have a great relationship with their dad.

After graduation in January of 1995, I took my driving test. Passed on the first try. I expected no less from myself. Funny thing on that day, I spotted my mom following me around. She was so proud. Here was her girly girl driving a big rig! A week later I took a bus to a week of orientation, jumped in with a trainer for four weeks, and then was handed the keys to my very own rig. I drove OTR for two years. Oh the stories I could tell!

Now I had to get my two years of "experience." Accident free and many many miles later, it was now time to get that "local" job. I typed up a really great resume and sent it to about ten local companies hiring through the classifieds. Not one called. I did follow-ups with them but was turned down every time. That boiling blood feeling was starting to surface again. Instead of getting upset I knew I had to find a way around the "women" thing. I was never told that was the reason I wasn't hired but I knew. We call it "women's intuition." I had a plan. A few weeks went by and I typed up a new resume. I gave no clue of gender. I used my first and middle initial and my full last name ... L.J. Hing. I sent them to the same ten companies.

Funny how a bit of cleverness helps, the phone rang off the wall. With every answer I replied, this is L.J., sorry, but I have taken employment with a great company that knows me by Lisa. Thank you anyway. During those few weeks of trying to figure out what to do I saw a sign in a window that read, "hiring drivers." I went in and said, "Hi, I'm a truck driver!" I was hired on the spot.

I drove from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday hauling wet grain in a dump trailer. I had weekends off and made a great pay. I raised my three boys (with help from dad) and my "man's" truck driving job.

I stayed single. I prefer that. My boys are grown and out living on their own. None plan to follow in my tire tracks, but my oldest is a diesel mechanic and the twins both work at a factory that I've actually hauled freight out of. After becoming an empty nester, I decided to get back out on the road. So I did. I'm driving a straight truck now, or as I like to call it "a big six." I pretty much do the same as the big rigs, just lighter loads and no swapping trailers. My sleeper is huge! I like that. I run the roads with my 110# Rotti. He is my monster. I've been at it for two years now. I love the life. I love the road.